

R 0076

INTERPRETIVE PROSPECTUS

(DRAFT)

VOYAGEUR VISITOR CENTER  
SUPERIOR NATIONAL FOREST  
FOREST SERVICE-USDA

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R-9 Interpretive Services  
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## SUMMARY

The Voyageur Visitor Center of the Superior National Forest was among the first of such facilities built by the Forest Service. The Center was designed to provide Forest-wide visitor information services with exhibits which interpreted development, exploitation, and recovery of the Area's natural resources. The exhibits are now 17 years old.

The Center's functions have since grown both in size and complexity from its original mission. Passage of the National Wilderness Systems Act of 1964, and later P.L. 95-495, required the additions of Visitor Distribution and User Education Programs. Forest recreation management needs have undergone significant changes with intensified wilderness management and the need to modify attitudes and behavior of wilderness users.

To be responsive to these needs, the Voyageur Visitor Center must undertake a new mission. The Center's three primary functions of information, permit service, and user education must be logically focused to address Forest recreation management needs.

A new mission theme of "The Wilderness Challenge" is recommended. Sub-themes of "You Have Choices", "Can You Survive the Wilderness?", and "Can Wilderness Survive You?", transfer this theme into component messages and media. A combination of new modular exhibits and audio-visual programming with a revised floorplan organization is recommended.

An Interpretive Prospectus for the Voyageur Visitor Center (VVC) was my selection as a project for the 1981 "Professional Development for Outdoor Recreation Managers" course offered at Clemson University. A project is a partial requirement for all enrollees.

New direction for the Voyageur Visitor Center has been under consideration for a number of years. A "Master Plan" addressing reorganization of the Center was produced in 1980 by the Forest. Recommendations contained in this report, which dealt with increasing VVC responsibilities, space and reorganization needs, were never implemented. My contact with the Forest on this matter initially dealt with developing a plan to replace the Center's exhibits. Upon accepting this assignment and undertaking some preliminary review of the VVC's functions and needs, it became readily apparent that a "total" approach was needed.

I arranged for a Technical Assistance Trip (TAT) to the Forest in late January of 1982 for the purposes of gathering field data and becoming oriented to the VVC's functions. My week's activities began with a briefing by the Forest Supervisor, Recreation Staff Officer and the latter's staff. At this time I proposed that the task at hand be modeled as an interpretive prospectus which would address the entire VVC and its functions. The Forest was readily agreeable to this approach.

The remaining portion of my field time was spent in the Ely, MN area where the VVC is located. A considerable portion of this time was spent with the Center Director and other District staff in gathering information on VVC functions. Side excursions were made to other interpretive facilities within a day's drive of Ely and staff were interviewed here as well.

Selected contacts were also made with individual Ely citizens and outfitters to ascertain community support and attitudes in regard to the VVC. Although limited in scope, this proved to be very instructive and largely supportive of what I had already learned from my staff contacts on the Forest. Upon conclusion of my trip and during the writing of the Prospectus, I maintained contact with Forest staff as I had need to clarify information.

The format used in this report was taken from National Park Service (NPS) planning guidelines and modified to accommodate certain needs associated with this study. A prospectus approach was considered most appropriate in light of the fact that no higher level of interpretive planning exists at the Forest level. Normally - or rather optimistically - a Forest-wide interpretive plan would provide the necessary discussion of alternatives and general direction necessary to develop a "facility plan." Because the NPS prospectus format is of a broader, more general format than a facility plan, it was more appropriate under these circumstances.

Interpretive planning and program activities have been soundly criticized as being unsupportive of management needs. Past program activities have indeed in many cases been too oriented to visitor entertainment and enjoyment. But disregarding the Forest visitor's perspective for a straight management message - or worse, propaganda - invariably produces dismal results. Both perspectives must be encompassed - and integrated - to build a successful interpretive program. I have attempted to provide this direction in this prospectus by using management concerns as a foundation on which visitor needs and interests are built. Its success will, of course, be largely determined by the intent and thoughtfulness with which it is carried out.

This Prospectus is also entirely consistent with National and Regional Interpretive Services policy and direction. The current emphasis on program efficiency is reflected in the proposal for exhibits which can be simply produced and maintained by Forest Technicians and Older American employees. A modular and mobile arrangement of exhibits allows for flexible use of these resources Forest-wide and obviates the necessity of future expensive exhibit turnover.

The total projects costs for the full VVC plan, likely to exceed \$100,000, could be considered quite modest and efficient in terms of visitor contacts and the management objectives achieved as a result of these contacts. If we are to maintain such centers at all, it must be with firm direction, objectives and public service.

## INTRODUCTION

The Voyageur Visitor Center (VVC) is located in the community of Ely in Northern Minnesota and within the Superior National Forest. Ely, with a population of just under 5,000 residents, lies approximately 120 miles north of Duluth/Superior, Minnesota and may be reached by U.S. Highway 53 and State Highway 169.

The economy of Ely and nearby communities is based primarily on mining, forest products, and tourism. The area may be characterized as a destination resort and recreation attraction due to the outstanding opportunities offered by the abundant lakes, scenery and winter sports. The area has held a fascination for mankind dating from prehistoric times through the colorful fur trading era of 'Les Voyageurs' to exploitation of the rich iron and timber reserves.

Even before the establishment of the Superior National Forest in 1909, a small but dedicated group of individuals recognized the need to preserve the great wild region bordering Canada, known as the Boundary Waters. Their efforts began over fifty years of controversy on how this area should best be conserved and managed.

In 1938, the Forest Service designated the Boundary Waters as a Primitive Area and later officially changed its name to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area (BWCA). The BWCA was classified as Wilderness with enactment of the National Wilderness System Act of 1964. But it was not until passage of P.L. 95-495 in 1978 that the BWCA truly achieved its wilderness status.

This last legislation added 45,000 acres to the wilderness, provided for phasing out motorized boat use of most lakes and established a protective no-mining zone around the area. Equally important was the allocation of funds to compensate affected business establishments. The Forest Service was directed to develop a comprehensive management plan which would include "user education" for a wilderness experience.

The latter point is central to this prospectus. Without user education, no wilderness can long retain the essential character for which it was set aside. Without user education, management of a wilderness area will be frustrated and perhaps increasingly punitive in orientation.

The present Voyageur Visitor Center was not intended to expressly fill this mission. When opened in 1965, the Center and later its exhibits were designed to provide general orientation and information to the forest visitor. There was no forecasting the development and rapid growth of a visitor distribution system to regulate use. Management problems within the BWCA--many of which are best handled through user education--have since come into sharp focus. The majority of present forest visitors--primarily oriented to a wilderness experience--come with more specific needs and questions. For these reasons and more, the Voyageur Visitor Center must now undertake a new mission.

During 1981, the Voyageur Visitor Center was open to visitors seven days a week, 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., from May 1 to September 30. Use of the Center is presently divided among five functional areas. These may be characterized as exhibits, audio-visual, nature trail, personal services, visitor distribution system and nature trail. Although the visitor distribution system (BWCA permit system) is actually a personal service, it is staffed and handled separately from most other VVC personal services.

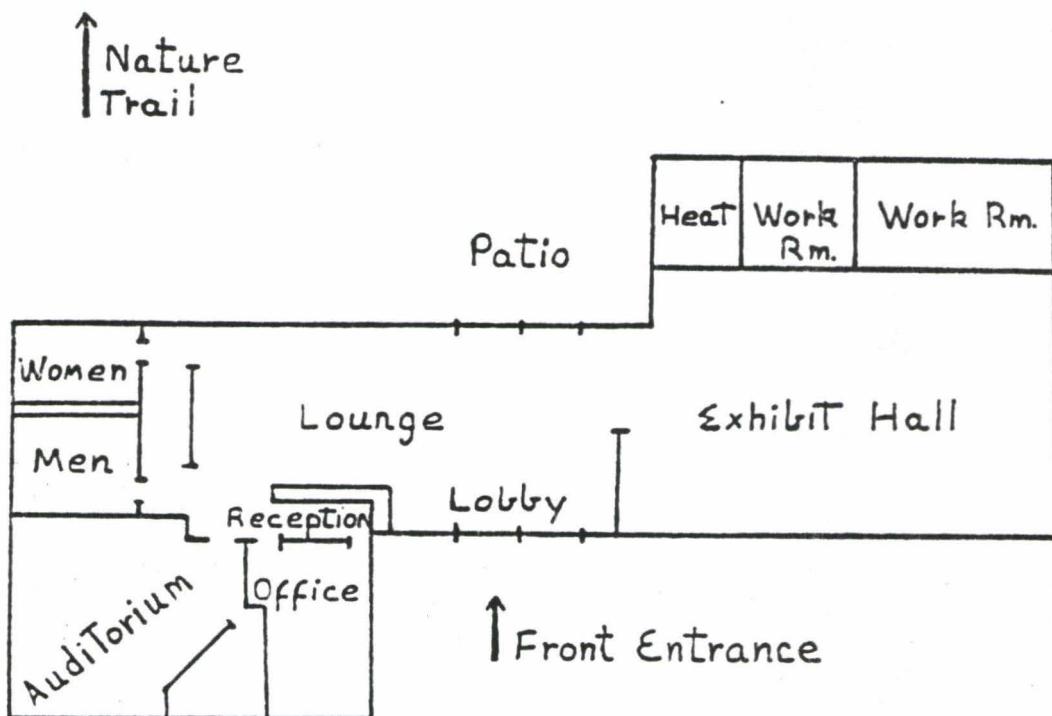
#### Exhibits

The exhibit hall is to the right of visitors as they enter the VVC. This wing of the building is semi-partitioned to both visually separate it from the lobby area and to direct visitor traffic into the exhibit room. The exhibits are arranged sequentially clockwise around the three walls of the room, with the exception of a large Voyageur's canoe, which is located centrally.

The exhibits deal with the development, exploitation, and need for management of the Superior National Forest area resources, with somewhat of a focus on the Voyageur's era. The large canoe--a striking exhibit--has a visitor actuated audio system which relates the Voyageur's life in French accent.

VOYAGEUR'S VISITOR CENTER FLOOR PLAN

(Not to exact scale)



Other than the canoe, the wall located exhibits deal with following subject matter - listed as the visitor encounters them.

1. Geology - Lakes, rivers, and landforms.
2. Wildlife - Eagle, wolf, N. pike specimens.
3. Lure of the Lake Country - Flat panel.
4. Chippewa Indians - Artifacts and culture.
5. Voyageurs - Artifacts and life style.
6. Miners - Artifacts and life style.
7. Lumberjacks - Artifacts and life style.
8. Virgin Forest to Desolation - Flat panel.
9. Multiple Use - Rotating flat panels.
10. Archeology (Pictographs) - Flat panel.

Detached from the exhibit room and located in the main lobby area is a large wooden map panel of the BWCA. The panel is well done but does not attempt any interpretation of the area.

#### Audio Visual

A small auditorium is located in the left front corner of the VVC with respect to the front entrance. The room is capable of seating 40 to 50 individuals, has a large screen and rear enclosed projection booth. Projection equipment consists of two 16mm projectors, two slide projectors, dissolve unit, tape deck and a self-contained Caramate slide projector. Some of the equipment may need replacing soon due to age and heavy use.

Audio-visual materials are shown both inside and outside the Center according to special programing and public requests. There are eleven 16mm films and four slide tape shows presently used.

Personal Services

There are six full-time seasonal guides which handle most Center personal services. Some information services are also handled by the Center receptionists as part of their BWCA permit duties. The Center, during 1981, held both special (pre-arranged) and regular daily programs.

Special programs involved a 6-week children series, a 6-week nursing home series, and an 8-week evening program series. Subject matter for these programs ranged from conservation films and talks to children, preparing wild gathered foods for elderly audiences, to demonstration and use of camping equipment. In addition, guides handled school group visits from ten area schools on a pre-arranged basis.

VVC guides also scheduled an average of 22 regular daily programs at the Center during June, July and August of 1981. These consisted primarily of film showings, with periodic demonstrations and talks. Attendance at these programs by month were: June - 1,125 visitors; July - 2,725; and August - 2,061.

Visitor Distribution System

The BWCA permit service is staffed with ten seasonal personnel, one of which is the Supervisory Information Receptionist. As stated above, this group also provides information services to Center visitors. Because of the 12-hour, 7-day week schedule, staff have staggered work periods, with approximately three individuals on duty at any given time.

Service is provided to visitors seeking BWCA permits over the main reception counter in the lobby-lounge area and records are maintained in the Center's office. During 1981, a total of 10,380 permits were issued over a 110 day season from the VVC. With an average of five individuals per permit, this figures to 51,900 visitors total for the season, or 472 per day on average, visiting the Center.

A variety of printed materials are distributed by BWCA permit staff at the reception desk. An information packet is mailed or given to BWCA permittees, including a map and regulations. Over twelve books, brochures and pamphlets covering everything from wildlife, camping, fishing, and equipment, to references and regulations are also available free to the visitor. A Superior National Forest map is sold for \$1.00, and other maps covering canoe routes, hiking trails and skiing trails, are free.

The Visitor Distribution System was first established in 1971 and soon became the dominate use of the VVC. Because of a perceived conflict of purposes, the permit system was separated from other Center functions in 1971 by removing it to the rear of the building with its own outside entrance. This was reversed back to the main reception counter area in 1981 because of the inconvenience to both visitors and Center staff.

#### Nature Trail

Departing and ending at the rear of the Center is approximately a one-quarter mile nature trail. The theme deals primarily with plant identification and natural forest processes. A large sign at the trailhead sets the overall tone for the hike.

The difficulty level of the trail is within all age limits and most physical conditions, including the handicapped. What could be considered part of the trail hike is a series of colored wood panels mounted on posts immediately behind the Center. Visible from inside the Center as well, these serve to illustrate how color can intrude on the forest (or wilderness setting).

Two major interpretive centers presently exist within a reasonable drive of the Ely area. Another is under construction in Ely itself and tentative plans are laid for a second within this community. All of these deal with the interpretation of Northern Minnesota's natural resources and cultural history and as such, overlap the exhibits of the Voyageur Visitor Center.

Just outside of Grand Rapids, Minnesota, and accessible by State Highways 169 and 2, is The Forest History Center. Situated on a large tract of land, the Museum complex is composed of a main museum building, an outlying full-scale reconstruction of an early day logging camp, a forest patrolman's cabin with fire tower, and a woodland walking trail. The museum and its outlying features cover the exploitation of the State's virgin pineries through to the contemporary management of forest resources. Sidelights include some treatment of local Indian culture and the recreation resource, including the BWCA. The museum conducts interpretive tours and employs seasonal employees in period costume to demonstrate logging and related crafts. The facility has been free to the public, but a minor entrance fee may be charged in 1982.

Closer to Ely and accessible by U.S. Highway 169 is the Iron Range Interpretive Center just outside Hibbing, Minnesota. The large multilevel building oversees an open-pit iron mine. The extensive exhibits of this museum focus on the geology and cultural/historical aspects of mining in Northern Minnesota, with an excellent treatment of the ethnic contributions of immigrants to this area. Over 100,000 people visit this facility annually which has an adult admission fee of \$1.50. The Museum Staff conducts an extensive personal services program year-around featuring themes as Ethnic Days, Antique Cars, and Hunter Day. Lectures, film showings, and local craft displays are also part of this program.

Within Ely itself is the Vermillion Junior College. The college now has under construction a \$100,000 exhibit which will be housed in the administration building. The exhibits will interpret the history of the Ely community and its immediate surrounding with a time-line beginning with local Indian culture and extending through the fur trade, lumbering and mining periods. One portion of the exhibit will deal with environmental concerns (a changing exhibit) which will undoubtedly focus to some extent on the controversial development and use of the BWCA Wilderness. This exhibit, when installed in 1982, will particularly duplicate and supersede in effectiveness the exhibits of the VV.

Still in the planning stage are plans by a local Ely businessman to open an exhibit devoted entirely to mining history and artifacts. Because of the wealth of information and artifacts on mining in this area, and because tourism is being avidly pursued by the Ely community, prospects for this development are considered good.

It is apparent from the preceding that the exhibtry of the Voyageur Visitor Center no longer serves a unique purpose. The Forest visitor is or will be able to view more comprehensive and professionally accomplished exhibits in the visiting area. A portion of the Center's audiovisual material could be classified accordingly. As yet to be discussed, the exhibtry equally does not serve the purposes of contemporary Forest management.

A legitimate question - one being asked with increasing frequency - is "Can the Private Sector better handle this function?" Concessionaires now handle a variety of services on public lands including an experimental Forest Service program now underway to evaluate campground management in this regard. In addition, care must be taken that public programs and services are not already duplicated by the off-Forest private sector or are capable of being developed as such.

Where does the VVC with its present and proposed services fit in this regard?

First, there is an active group of guides and outfitters now providing services to the BWCA and other forest area visitors. These individuals primarily offer entry permits (as part of the Forest's cooperator plan) and equipment rentals. Most serve some visitor information needs with lists of recommended foods, maps, and other items such as survival related techniques. A few outfitters take their service to the public more seriously by incorporating wilderness training programs of a cursory nature.

While some of these services are duplicates of those offered at the VVC, several key factors come to bear here. Outfitters are in business to sell or rent equipment, not orient/educate visitors to the resource. It is quite unlikely that prospective clients - unsuited to a wilderness journey - are discouraged from renting equipment in favor of a more passive Forest experience. The livelihood of guides and outfitters depends on volume of clients which is not always consistent with ethical use of the BWCA and its resources. The BWCA guides and outfitters are also a loosely organized and highly competitive group. It is difficult to see where public information and education needs would be met in a consistent and conscientious manner.

At the same time, it is unrealistic to expect the VVC to fully meet all Forest visitor needs. As with the present system to issue BWCA entry permits through cooperator licensing, guides, outfitters and others have a valid supportive role to play in this regard. A substantial number of visitors (up to 45 percent in the Ely area for 1980) may never formally contact the Forest Service or the VVC. Many in this group category are repeat visitors and/or local residents. Some of the more difficult visitor management problems may be associated with this group as well.

What is needed is a substantially increased effort by the VVC to draw guides, outfitters and other groups into a cooperative approach to addressing visitor needs. The VVC must take a strong central role in this effort, providing both leadership and resources to cooperating groups Forest-wide.

Another possibility of providing high quality visitor services through the VVC would be the opening of an interpretive association sales outlet. Currently, the Lake States Interpretive Association services this area and has repeatedly expressed interest in the VVC. Ely community businesses have been consistently resistant to this idea, however, based on their perception of a sales outlet being competitive. It is Forest Service policy that such interpretive association outlets will not be established in agency facilities where competition with local private business exists.

Even so, the Forest should continue to explore possibilities in this regard if the level of community support for the Center grows and/or a mutually attractive arrangement can be worked out.

Growing Responsibilities

The Voyageur Visitor Center was planned and built with the objective of providing Forest-wide information services to the public. As already noted, the organization of the Visitor Distribution Program in 1970 was viewed as creating some dislocation of this objective with competition for staff time and space. The development of a user education program in 1978 further exacerbated this problem by adding a third functional layer to Center operations.

When in 1979, the Director for the VVC transferred to a new Region, the Forest subsequently (1980) hired a User Education Specialist with offices in the VVC building. This position also accrued duties in managing Information Services and the Visitor Distribution Program. The position was later housed at the District Office in Ely. Further changes in Center operations are planned for the 1982 season with the addition of a computer-based permit system. The complexity of the Center continues to grow.

Passage of the National Wilderness System Act in 1964 and P.L. 95-495 in 1978 have profoundly affected management needs on the Superior National Forest. One effect has been to "showcase" this unique water-based wilderness with the predictable rapid increase in use. Increased use has compounded environmental deterioration, user conflicts, enforcement and safety related problems. The increasing popularity of the BWCA has also meant an increase in inexperienced users who have little or no knowledge of wilderness, its ethical use, or even rudimentary survival techniques.

A related problem of inexperienced Forest visitors is that of expectations. When these expectations do not reasonably correspond to a resulting recreation experience, dissatisfaction with both the resource and the management agency may result. Unreasonable expectations can also lead to safety and enforcement problems, as with the individual who, emulating the Voyageurs, wants to "live off the land". It is also to the advantage of management to nurture certain expectations other than those involving just the traditional uses of canoeing, camping, and fishing. These might be more aptly described as quality expectations, such as solitude, no-trace camping, and wilderness study.

A second effect of the legislation was to further fuel the long standing controversies over management and use of the BWCA with residents of this area. Phased discontinuance of motorized boat use of most lakes and the regulated entry system, for example, have caused hostile reactions from residents who historically have viewed the BWCA as an unregulated playground. Ill feeling on the part of residents towards the Forest Service has also added to environmental and enforcement problems, both within and outside the BWCA.

In summary of the foregoing concerns, it could be said that contemporary Forest recreation and wilderness related management problems fall into three categories:

1. Wilderness Skills and Ethics.
2. Visitor Expectations.
3. Local Resident Attitudes.

It is equally apparent that the functions of the VVC only partially address themselves to these problems as in the case of the AV section, or not at all, as with the exhibits and nature trail. The third category of resident attitudes is the more intractable of the three and, at least in part, beyond the scope of VVC programs to resolve. (Never-the-less, present VVC outreach programs into local communities could be more effective and directed in this regard.)

#### New Direction Needed

Visitor centers which dispense only information and entertainment for forest visitors are a luxury no longer affordable. Increasing visitor management opportunities and problems combined with today's relative budget austerity clearly support the premise that visitor centers must function as an integral part in addressing forest management problems. Private industry could not afford to do otherwise and neither can the Forest Service.

Incorporating the functions of the BWCA permit system and the User Education Program into the VVC's traditional functions has been viewed as competitive and diluting the Center's true mission. Yet the problem is not one of competition, but rather that of determining the correct mission for the VVC. Given the three management problem areas listed above, these functions can become compatible, reinforcing and supportive of management needs on the Superior National Forest.

#### A New Mission

What remains to be done then is to bring the three programs into an integrated whole which is directly supportive of recreation and wilderness management on the Superior National Forest.

This new mission can be stated as follows:

The mission of the Voyageur Visitor Center shall be to employ the full resources of the Information, User Education and Visitor Distribution Programs to:

1. Promote knowledge, skills and ethical use of wilderness and other Forest lands.
2. Provide for realistic visitor expectations and enjoyment of the total recreation spectrum available on the Forest.
3. Enlist the understanding and cooperation of outfitters, other local residents and visitors in management of the Forest's unique recreation resource.

The Visitor

Unfortunately, a good visitor profile or audience analysis for the VVC is not available. Specific information on age, sex, occupation, educational level, origin, and other socio-economic data has not been gathered or remains uncompiled from permit system records. Information on repeat visitations, wilderness skill levels and the percent of individuals seeking other than wilderness experiences has not been tabulated. Governmental restrictions on public questionnaires make this information difficult to obtain. Yet such data is basic to designing effective communications and programs with the public.

For this reason, the Forest should consider requesting Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approval <sup>1/</sup> for a comprehensive audience analysis, preferably spanning the entire forest and at the earliest opportunity. The analysis would be the foundation for building a Forest-wide Interpretive Plan which would reflect and support the Forest Management Plan.

What is known and already discussed is that over 10,000 visitors came to the VVC during the 1981 season of 110 days to obtain permits. With an average of five individuals for each permit, approximately 50,000 individuals came to the Ely area and potentially visited the VVC. Center records show an average of 94 permits issued per day and therefore an average potential of 472 individuals visiting the Center daily (again using the factor of five). Permits issued from the VVC comprise approximately 26 percent of those issued for the entire BWCA for the 1980 season.

<sup>1/</sup> OMB approval would not be necessary in the event the recommended audience analysis was undertaken as an independent and private project such as with a graduate student sponsored by a university.

Center records show that 22 daily programs (films and sometimes demonstrations) were scheduled during June, July and August of 1981. A total of 1152, 2725 and 2061 individuals attended by month, respectively, yielding an average daily attendance of 76.8 (June), 87.6 (July), and 93.6 (August). When arrayed against the average daily visitation of 472, the Center was able to capture less than 20 percent of daily visitors for these programs.

While the value of these figures may be questionable, they may serve as an indication of low visitor interest and program effectiveness. No data exists as to the percent of visitors viewing the exhibits or taking the nature trail. New exhibits and programs at the VVC should seek to significantly improve visitor participation and records should be maintained for this purpose.

#### The Theme

A theme encapsulates--in a bold and succinct manner--the message designed for the Forest visitor. The theme and its subcomponents prescribe what we wish the visitor to learn, experience, and understand. It is the cornerstone for designing the media package as well.

In developing a theme for the VVC, both wilderness and other Forest recreation opportunities must be considered. Yet public use of the Center is overwhelmingly towards wilderness use and it is very probable that much of the non-wilderness use of Forest campgrounds and other facilities is ancillary to wilderness day use. Recreation management problems are heavy to the BWCA Wilderness as already discussed.

It appears then, that a wilderness theme which would also interpret its use and values in relation to other Forest recreation opportunities would be appropriate. The theme chosen is:

- THE WILDERNESS CHALLENGE -

Three sub-themes logically follow which translate the main theme into functional areas and which serve to expedite the VVC Mission Statement. These sub-themes are:

- Forest Recreation: You Have Choices!

- Can You Survive the Wilderness?

- Can the Wilderness Survive You?

#### The Purpose

Each sub-theme, as a functional area, may be broken into its individual messages. Each message in turn should support an important component of the Mission Statement. The messages themselves are what we anticipate the visitor will learn in his brief stay at the Center. Following is a listing of messages by sub-theme and mission component, the latter in parentheses. Explanatory notes are added where needed:

- I. Forest Recreation: You Have Choices! (Visitor expectation, community support, outfitters cooperation)

1. Welcome, VVC Location and Services.
2. Forest Recreation Spectrum. - Major opportunities available to visitor by general class, with interpretation of the experience.
3. Opportunities to Experience. - Selected opportunities to learn or experience by individual trips both in and out of wilderness, e.g., a canoe trip designed for wildlife viewing and interpretation.
4. Handicapped Opportunities.
5. Local Services. - Services within the local community and area which the visitor may need or use including resorts, outfitters, guides, etc.

## II. Can You Survive Wilderness? (wilderness skills, safety)

1. Canoeing and Portaging Skills.
2. Orienteering - Techniques and materials for finding your way in wilderness.
3. Reading Weather - Particularly oriented to wilderness canoeing, hypothermia, etc.
4. Equipment, Food, Clothing.
5. Winter Survival.

III. Can Wilderness Survive You? (wilderness ethics, management and regulations)

1. No Trace Camping.
2. Touching the Past. - Cultural resources to be enjoyed but lightly touched.
3. Color and Noise Intrusions.
4. Sensitive Plant and Animal Communities.
5. Wilderness Regulations. - Including their interpretation.

Media selection involves the method by which each message will be conveyed to Center visitors. The choices of media are wider than those selected for the VVC but for practical and economic reasons, they have been limited as follows: audio-visual; exhibits; printed materials; nature trail (signing); and Travel Information Station (audio broadcast). The accompanying tabular array of media by message and sub-theme will serve as a guide to the following discussion.

I. Forest Recreation: You Have Choices.

1. Welcome, VVC Location and Services. - A Traveler Information Service (TIS) is a repeating audio broadcast device which traveling Forest visitors may pick up on the AM frequency of their car radio. A TIS is used in conjunction with a highway sign advising the traveler to tune to the correct frequency. The effective range is normally less than three miles with a message duration of approximately 15 to 30 seconds. This device would serve to funnel Forest visitors into the VVC, briefly list basic services and hours of operation.
2. Forest Recreation Spectrum. - A 16mm movie would best interpret the wide range of recreation opportunities available. Subject matter should deal heavily with visitor expectations by interpreting recreation experiences. The film would be made entirely on Forest.

Message and Media Selection by Sub-Themes.

Sub-Theme	Related Mission	Message	Audio-Visual (M=Movie) (S.T.=Slide-Tape)	Media	Printed Materials	Personal Services	Nature Trail	Traveler Info. Station
I. You Have Choices.	Visitor Expectations, local community support	1. Welcome, VVC location, Services 2. Forest Rec. Spectrum 3. Opportunities to Experience. 4. Handicapped Opportunities 5. Local Services.						X
II. Can You Survive Wilderness?	Wilderness Skills, Safety	1. Canoeing, Portaging Skills 2. Orienteering 3. Reading Weather 4. Equipment, Food, Clothing 5. Winter Survival	M S.T. S.T. S.T.		X X X	X		
III. Can Wilderness Survive You?	Wilderness Management, Regulations	1. No Trace Camping 2. Touching the Past 3. Color, Noise Intrusions 4. Sensitive Plant, Animal Communities 5. Regulations and Why	S.T. S.T. S.T. S.T.	X X X	X X	X		X

3. Opportunities to Experience. - The visitor would be invited to experience Forest recreation opportunities by specific subject matter. Canoe trips, hiking trails, skiing trips, etc., would be prepared for visitors interested in geology, wildlife, plant communities, cultural resource sites and other possibilities. A slide-tape introduction to possibilities and interpretive brochures for each trip (with map) would best serve this message.
4. Handicapped Opportunities. - A slide-tape production is recommended featuring both opportunities, techniques and equipment possibilities. This needs to be more specific to recreation type than Forest setting.
5. Local Services. - Various printed materials available within the area on outfitters, guides, resorts, supplies, etc., should be arranged on a self-serve rack within the Center. This display could be developed and maintained in cooperation with the local Chamber of Commerce.

### III. Can You Survive Wilderness?

1. Canoeing and Portaging Skills. - Several 16mm films (Canadian Film Board and other) are presently available for purchase. Demonstrations for large groups by Center guides should be scheduled by request. An old canoe with shoulder pads could be kept on the Center grounds for demonstrations and visitor use.

2. Orientering. - A slide-tape production is recommended featuring the correct selection and use of maps and compasses. An exhibit which interprets various maps, compasses and methods is also advisable. This should be a hands-on exhibit, perhaps using a fixed staff compass and also be conveniently mobil (modular in nature) to rotate among District offices. A brochure should be available for visitors to take on their trip.
3. Reading Weather. - This is primarily a safety and personal comfort message which alerts the visitor to wilderness and primitive camping weather hazards. A modular rotating exhibit is preferred.
4. Equipment Food and Clothing. - Because of the safety, personal comfort, and recreation enjoyment considerations involved, this message deserves wide treatment. The recommended exhibit would be divided into self-contained modular components which could be displayed separately or as a unit whole. Components of this exhibit would be mobile as above. A slide-tape production would feature equipment use, food preparation, etc., and directly reinforce regulations pertaining to the BWCA. A printed sheet or brochure should list recommended types of equipment as a visitor reference guide. Personal demonstrations of wild, freeze-dried and other appropriate foods for wilderness use should be scheduled in the VVC, Forest campgrounds, and the local community.
5. Winter Survival. - This subject matter is important enough to justify separate treatment in a brochure. A general portrayal of equipment and survival techniques is recommended.

### III. Can Wilderness Survive You?

1. No Trace Camping. - This is perhaps the single most important message the Forest wishes to impart to the visitor. A wide media treatment is called for. The message should be directed towards ethical considerations of wilderness with regulations and enforcement submerged. An exhibit should be devised into logical modular and separate components similar to the Equipment, Food and Clothing Exhibit above. Some Materials and concepts presently exist in a staff fabricated exhibit now in the VVC. A slide-tape show should focus on techniques, environmental concerns and sanitation aspects. A brochure aimed at the juvenile and younger ages should feature how a "Voyageur" camps (how to) with a corresponding "Tenderfoot" section (how not to). Personal services demonstrations should be developed for groups (Scouts, etc.) on an outreach basis.
2. Touching the Past. - A slide-tape production, developed entirely on the Forest, should interpret the area's rich cultural resources in terms of their enduring values and fragile nature--through the eyes and accent of a "Voyageur".
3. Color and Noise Intrusions. - Color panels should be mounted off the nature trail at one stop with corresponding sign interpretation.

4. Sensitive Plant and Animal Communities. - The slide-tape production should focus on describing these communities and their fragile nature. Complex and detailed ecological relationships should be avoided and emphasis given to their beauty and how they characterize wilderness. An attractive but simple non-mobile exhibit could use existing Center and other taxidermy, pictures, and dried plant material. The exhibit story-line should attempt little more than describing the components and fragility of these communities with words held to a minimum.

5. Regulations and Why? - A brochure should be developed listing and interpreting "Why" for major BWCA use regulations--particularly those the Forest has found troublesome to enforce.

As a general note, exhibits should be open (no glass enclosures) with as few barriers as possible (actual or visual) separating the visitor from the exhibit. Emphasis should be placed where possible on touching and manipulation of materials such as animal pelts with the wildlife related exhibit.

Exhibit artifacts should be readily removable and interchangeable to the extent possible to allow for fresh and changing exhibits. Simple rustic materials and construction would allow inexpensive repairs and remodeling by Forest staff while imparting a more compatible atmosphere with wilderness interpretation.

Design Problems

The Voyageur Visitor Center was built, as with many other such visitor centers, before the media package was developed. Among the building's weaknesses are insufficient staff work space, a small audio-visual room with a single entrance-exit and difficulties with visitor routing.

The present use of the building emphasizes compartmentalization with both the left and right wings partially screened visually from the entrance-lobby. The lobby itself is largely wasted space. The visitor is neither visually attracted to the exhibit hall, nor prepared for the exhibit contents. The lounge area, originally encompassing the reception counter and seating, now has a no-trace camping theme exhibit in place of former seating. The visitor seeking personal service must approach the long reception counter from which the reception staff need not (and probably do not) leave. The net effect on visitors then is one of compartments and barriers which could impart a feeling of "bureaucracy".

## Saving Exhibits

The present exhibits have several high quality components which should be retained and used. These include the Voyageur's canoe and wildlife taxidermy specimens. The wildlife specimens can be integrated into new exhibitory dealing with sensitive plant and animal communities. The Voyageur's canoe presents a problem because of the amount of space it takes up and because Voyageur interpretation is de-emphasized with the new exhibit orientation. Because of the Center's name identification with the Voyageurs, however, it is recommended that an all-weather glass-stone enclosure for the canoe be built in the center of the walkway approach to the building. A simple story-line would interpret the Voyageur's presence in the BWCA and how the Center received its name.

## Restructuring the Interior

As visitors enter the lobby portion of the VVC, they should be introduced to the theme of "The Wilderness Challenge". Immediately inside the lobby, they should confront "You Have Choices", with both this and the lounge space used for the related messages. Printed materials should be dispensed in these two areas and an attractively done listing of Center services should be posted. Existing partitions on either side of the lobby should be removed to provide an open space feeling.

The existing reception counter should be remodeled to smaller, lower half circle counter accessible from both sides. Only permits would be handled at this station. An addition of two separate but identical counters would be added to the lounge area preferably on either side of the picture window. These would be staffed by reception personnel for purposes of general information reinforcing the "Choices" theme. There would not be seating in this area except for staff at each counter.

Visitors will be enticed to enter the exhibit hall portion of the VVC by a prominent sign which portrays sub-themes two and three at this point. An audiophone message welcoming the visitor, should briefly state what the exhibits are about. Visitor flow should be counterclockwise as you face the hall (the reverse of the present traffic pattern) such as to conclude at the rear door of the Center. At this juncture, the visitor should encounter an invitation to view the nature trail with a brief message on what he/she will see.

The patio at the rear of the building should have shaded seating provided for those wishing to rest. An interpretive sign in this area would invite them to take the nature trail or try their hand at "portaging" the canoe available in this rear lawn area (by request of Center staff who would monitor this activity). The nature trail would be modified from its present use to include historical and modern uses of forest plant species as well as the color intrusion exhibit.

Major cost considerations for recommended actions in this prospectus involve the new exhibitory, audiovisual and printed materials, Traveler Information Station (T.I.S.) and the construction of a special outdoor viewing enclosure for the Voyageur's Canoe. Because the items involved are necessarily expensive, a low to moderate budget approach is suggested in which the Forest plays a significant part, where possible in preparation, construction and installation. Forest staff time is not factored into costs.

#### Exhibits

Design is perhaps the single most important aspect of a high quality exhibit which meets established objectives. This requires a high level of expertise and therefore this task should be contracted to the USDA Design Division, Washington, D.C. Estimated cost is \$20,000 for a complete design package.

Exhibit construction, if also contracted to USDA, would cost approximately \$80,000 to \$100,000 based on the six recommended exhibits. Using local construction materials, and staff resources in combination with a carefully tailored design package from USDA could reduce this cost to less than \$30,000. In addition, exhibits could be built sequentially thereby spreading cost over several budget years. The above estimate allows for the purchase of some professional audio and visual aides as an integral part of several exhibits.

The primary or most expensive item in this category is the proposed 16mm movie covering the Forest recreation spectrum. All aspects of such a medium require professional development. If this project is undertaken it is recommended that the USDA Media Division be given the contract. Cost estimates for a fifteen minute movie involve: Script writing - \$3,000; expenses associated with fielding a two-man crew on Forest location (two trips necessary to obtain seasonal footage) - \$10,000; laboratory development, editing and production of an "answer print" - \$28,000; and finally, two copies of the finished product - \$300. An original musical score would add \$4,700 and special film effects approximately \$3,000. The minimum basic cost (excluding the last two optional categories) would be estimated at \$41,300.

There are six 35mm slide-tape shows recommended in conjunction with various messages for the VVC. If production is undertaken by Forest personnel with the exception that a professional voice would be used, costs for each would be approximately \$300 or \$1,800 total.

Printed materials are difficult to estimate due to varying content and format. Nine separate productions are recommended. If the majority of these were held to individual pages for incorporation in a recreation opportunity guide, costs could be held to a minimum. Copies could be made by xeroxing for public handout. Estimated expenses for phototypesetting and professional layout of originals would be \$150 each or \$900 total.

Necessary equipment for a T.I.S. would be a transmitter, power supply, antenna and recording/repeater tape transport module. Total cost on today's market is \$1,975. If a solid state voice storage unit were to be used in lieu of the tape transport module, the total package price would rise to \$3,000. The latter piece of equipment is recommended because of short tape life expectancy (and costs) as well as maintenance-free operation for the voice storage unit.

Canoe Enclosure

The relative sophistication in constructing this enclosure would determine the costs. Assuming a stone foundation and wood/glass materials with the incorporation of a simple interpretive sign, costs could be held under \$2,000 if the Forest handled construction. A humidity controlling device, if necessary, could inflate this estimate.

COST ESTIMATES SUMMARY

Category	Itemized Costs	Total Cost
I. Exhibits		\$45,000
a. Design	\$20,000	
b. Construction	\$25,000	
II. Audio-visual		43,100
a. 16mm Movie	\$41,300	
b. 35mm Slide tapes (6)	\$ 1,800	
III. Printed Materials		900
IV. T.I.S. (with Voice Storage Unit)		3,000
V. Canoe Enclosure		2,000
TOTAL		\$94,000

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